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ABSTRACT

The adoption of a new philosophy and new learner goals by the Ohio State Board of Education spawned a variety of Department of Education efforts. The new educational objectives concern five major categories: basic education; cultural education; citizenship education; career education; and health/personal education. To effectively carry out these goals, it was decided that a statewide survey of citizens, educators, and students was necessary to determine their perceptions of Ohio schools and of the goals adopted by the State Board of Education. Ohio citizens rated: schools; general education priorities; the most important academic, practical, and affective skills; and school and family responsibility for student development. Survey results have been used in the revision of minimum standards in the schools. Major priorities include: (1) improving pupil achievement and attendance; (2) reducing discipline problems; (3) providing adequate funding for schools; (4) adjusting to declining enrollment; (5) implementing desegregation; (6) strengthening teacher education and staff development; and (7) enhancing school community relations. It is hoped that the combination of a revised philosophy and the adoption of statewide learner goals, new minimum standards, and new priorities will help Ohio schools, universities, and the public to direct their commitment, energy, and time to improving education for Ohio youngsters. Implications for teacher education programs are included. (CJ)

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Priorities for a "General Education of High Quality" in the State of Ohio: Effects on Emerging Relationships Among Universities, the State Board of Education, and the Public Schools

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Priorities for a "General Education of High Quality" in the State of Ohio: Effects on Emerging Relationships Among Universities, the State Board of Education, and the Public Schools

Recognizing a growing public concern over the quality of public education, the President of the State of Ohio Board of Education in March 1979 appointed a committee to develop goals for education for the 1980's. National data such as the Gallup Polls had repeatedly reported that the public believed their schools were not doing a good job of educating children. Those polls, of course, reflected the thinking across the nation. Yet, there was no way of knowing whether or not the beliefs of the nation's citizenry also represented the way Ohioans felt about their schools.

To adopt goals that would be appropriate for the state of Ohio, it was deemed necessary to conduct a number of surveys. The first of these surveys was conducted among the 615 Ohio school districts. The purpose of that survey was to determine whether or not individual school districts had identified educational goals which would provide direction for curricular programs. An analysis of the responses indicated that school districts reported two types of goals: educational goals and administrative/maintenance goals.

Since the purpose of the survey was to identify goals providing direction for curriculum development, only the educational goals were further analyzed. These educational goal statements appeared to cluster in five major categories: basic education, cultural education, citizenship education, career education, and health/personal education. It became immediately apparent that most of the school districts in the state of Ohio had not formally adopted goals for their school system.

Cocommitantly with the conduction of the survey of school districts, the State Board of Education addressed itself to a review of the philosophy of education for the state. Following lengthy discussions, the State Board adopted the following educational philosophy:

> The basic purposes of education are to perpetuate and improve the culture and enrich the quality of life for each person. In our democracy, the dignity and worth of the individual is of paramount importance. The success of our democracy depends upon all individuals participating to the best of their abilities. Education in our country, therefore, must provide for the fullest possible development of the talents and potentialities of all persons in order that they may participate fully in the cultural, political, social, and economic life of our democracy. To achieve these purposes, an effective program of education must be provided through our system of schools for all individuals.
>
> The responsibility for public education has been universally recognized in the United States as a state function. In turn, the responsibility for the operation of the public schools has been delegated to the local community by the state to insure that schools serve the people and to encourage all citizens to maintain an interest in and a feeling of personal responsibility for, the educational program. The right of free choice in education is recognized by allowing separate systems of non-public schools to develop alongside the public school system. The citizens of our state, therefore, must accept the responsibility for providing public schools, based upon the framework of our democracy, for all young persons regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
>
> Because of the importance of our educational system to the individual, the state, and the nation, the state must accept responsibility for insuring an educational program in keeping with the needs of the individual and society. This responsibility requires the provision of an adequately financed education program regardless of the economic conditions of the school district in which the student resides.
>
> The state, through its agency, the State Board of Education, establishes standards for the schools and their educational personnel, provides leadership to and services for the schools of the state, and encourages all schools to provide a general education of high quality. Included in such a program must be educational experiences planned to fit all students for effective citizenship, life-long learning, and productive endeavors.
>
> Parent, family, and community attitudes and values influence the concepts children and youth acquire about people, moral and spiritual values, the community, social institutions, and citizenship. Thus, it is essential for the school, the community, and the home to join together in accepting the responsibility of providing for the development of all children and youth to their maximum potential.

Following the adoption of this new philosophy, the Board Committee recommended that statewide educational goals be developed, and that they be learner outcome goals rather than the process goals that have been in existence in Ohio for approximately 17 years. In addition, it was recommended that the minimum standards for Ohio schools be revised so that they would form the framework around which schools could structure learning experiences which would assist the youngsters in attaining the goals.

The goals statements officially adopted by the Ohio Board of Education, in December 1979, are as follows:

Basic Learning

Students, to the extent of their individual abilities, shall acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for:

- --reading, writing, listening, and speaking effectively
- --performing mathematical operations accurately
- --respecting the rights and responsibilities associated with appropriate school behavior

Careers, Vocations, and Personal Finance

Students, to the extent of their individual abilities, shall acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for:

- --making career decisions and being qualified for a career choice
- --managing personal finances wisely
- --dealing with day to day personal and family living experiences

Citizenship

Students, to the extent of their individual abilities, shall acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for:

- --understanding the economic, political, and historical aspects of our government
- --functioning as a responsible citizen
- --living and working in an intergrated and multicultural society and an international world
- --understanding and protecting the physical environment

Cultural and Aesthetics

Students, to the extent of their individual abilities, should be provided the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for:

--enjoying or participating in the fine and performing arts
--enhancing aesthetic appreciation
--becoming proficient in a foreign language

Personal Development

Students, to the extent of their individual abilities, shall acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for:

--fostering critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making
--learning to respect and get along with people
--developing good character, self-understanding, and feelings of self-esteem
--developing a desire for learning now and in the future

Physical Health, Recreation, and Leisure

Students, to the extent of their individual abilities, shall acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for:

--developing and maintaining principles of physical health and safety
--engaging in worthwhile recreation and leisure time activities

The adoption of a new philosophy and learner goals by the State Board of Education on December 10, 1979, spawned a variety of Department of Education efforts. The philosophy and goals charted a course which the schools of Ohio will be following for probably the remainder of the decade of the 80's. Hence, it was essential that Department of Education, state universities, and public school efforts be consistent and focus around the directions which have been charted.

Three of the most significant and vital activities which staff in the Department of Education directed their resources toward were a statewide survey of citizens, educators, and students to determine their perceptions of Ohio schools as well as to ascertain the relative ratings which these groups gave to the goals adopted by the State Board of Education. The

survey provided the Department of Education with valid data on how the public views their schools and what they expect from them.

That survey, which was conducted by a nationally respected polling firm during January of 1980, included a scientifically developed random sample of 1,067 Ohioans of all ages living in all parts of the state. Their schooling varied from completing elementary school to attaining post graduate training. Of the citizens interviewed, 32 percent, compared to the national average of 28 percent, were public school parents. Other citizens had children in private or parochial schools. However, 61 percent had no children in school at all. The sampling error for the survey was ± three percent, with a 95 percent level of confidence.

When reviewing the results of the survey, it is important to consider that all the questions were geared to how citizens felt about their local school system. While responses cannot be generalized to the state as a whole, they do present an accurate picture of what Ohioans think of their local schools.

How did Ohio schools rate?

The majority of adults in Ohio (57 percent) gave the public schools a "B" or better "grade." Nineteen percent of all respondents gave their schools an "A," 38 percent a "B." As might be expected, public school parents gave their schools the highest grades; one-fourth gave the schools an "A," and nearly half, 44 percent, a "B." Highest ratings were noted by citizens in small cities or towns or suburban school districts. The older the respondent, the higher the ratings given the public schools.

These results are considerably higher than the national Gallup polls which had only 34 percent of adults rating the nation's schools a "B" or better. That is a very positive indicator; parents in general are saying their schools are doing a good job.

A major component of the survey was to determine what Ohioans believe constitutes a general education of high quality as defined by the State Board learner goals. These goals were further explicated for the survey and divided into three major areas. What are important practical, academic, and affective skills that make up a quality education? Residents were asked to rank the importance of skills in these areas for high school graduates and then state if it is the primary responsibility of the home or the school to teach these skills to children.

Ohio citizens were asked to rate how important eight practical skills are to the high school graduate. Judged a top priority by 95 percent of those surveyed was the ability to solve problems and make decisions. More than 90 percent also said that being able to function as a responsible citizen, get a job or continue one's education, deal with day-to-day personal and family living experiences, and manage personal finances wisely were very important. The ability to make career decisions was seen as very important by 83 percent, being able to deal with changes brought about by science and technology by 61 percent, and having the skill to participate in the arts by 35 percent.

The views of parents of different school-age children or those who live in communities of different sizes did not significantly vary regarding the degree of importance of the practical skills.

Ohio citizens said that the prime responsibility for teaching the practical skills, except acquiring skills needed to get a job or continue an education and having the ability to deal with changes brought about by science and technology, rests with either the home or both the home and school. In general, they also felt schools were doing a good to fair job of teaching these skills.

Of ten academic skills, citizens were asked to rate in terms of their importance to the high school graduate. Both parents and non-parents gave the highest priorities to the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and mathematics. Learning to read effectively was judged very important by 99 percent of Ohio citizens interviewed, while 96 and 91 percent said listening and writing effectively were also very important. The percentage of citizens that rated the other seven academic skills as very important were: health and safety habits (90 percent), speaking effectively (87 percent), performing mathematics computations accurately (85 percent), government (70 percent), sciences and technology (60 percent), the physical environment (53 percent), and reading and communicating a foreign language (27 percent).

Schools have the primary responsibility, in the opinion of Ohio citizens, for teaching students to read and communicate in a foreign language, perform mathematical computations accurately, write and read effectively, and learn about the sciences and technology, government, and the physical environment. Both the home and school have the responsibility to teach children health and safety habits and how to read and speak effectively, Ohioans said.

In evaluating the performance of local schools in teaching academic skills, the majority of Ohio residents felt the schools were doing a good to fair job, with public school parents rating the schools higher than private or parochial school parents or those with no school-age children.

Ohioans were also asked to rate the importance of eight affective skills, or ways of thinking or feeling, to the high school graduate. Ninety-eight percent believed having a code of personal integrity was very important. The other seven skills and the percentage of those who felt they were very important to the graduate include: understands and feels good about one's life (92 percent), recognizes the rights and responsibilities that go with appropriate school

behavior (92 percent), understands and respects differences among people (89 percent), has the willingness to protect and conserve the environment (77 percent), makes worthwhile use of leisure time (73 percent), and enjoys the arts (34 percent).

As in the practical skills, citizens in Ohio largely pinpointed the main responsibility for teaching these skills to either the home or both the home and school. The only skill area in which a plurality thought the school carried the main responsibility was teaching children to enjoy the arts.

Public school parents and non-parents generally agreed that schools are doing a good to fair job in teaching these skill areas.

The data on how Ohio citizens, educators, and students feel about a general education of high quality is certainly essential and vital to policy makers at both the state and the local levels. Understanding what citizens feel is right and wrong about schools and what they perceive to be an education of high quality are important ingredients for improving the quality of Ohio's public schools. In addition, and perhaps most important in terms of improving the public schools is that the results of this survey, along with the State Board of Education's philosophy and goals, have been the undergirding force in the process of revising minimum standards for Ohio's elementary and secondary schools.

It had been 12 years since Ohio's senior high and junior high minimum standards were developed and a decade since the adoption of elementary minimum standards. Hence, the State Board of Education directed staff in the Department of Education to revise the present minimum standards for all Ohio schools.

To proceed to accomplish that objective, a broadly representative advisory committee was appointed for the the purpose of recommending

changes. The 34 members of that committee represent classroom teachers, superintendents, principals, curriculum specialists, students, and the general public. The advisory committee has been meeting since June of 1979.

The committee had four major objectives. The first was to thoroughly review the present minimum standards. The second was to gather input on needed modifications in those standards. The third was to determine public perceptions of what our schools should be doing, and the fourth was to recommend new minimum standards for Ohio schools.

To accomplish these multiple objectives, the committee, in addition to utilizing the statewide survey data of 1980, held ten regional meetings throughout Ohio in early 1980 to gather citizen, educator, and student input on possible revisions in the present minimum standards. More than 1,200 persons attended those hearings and provided significant and important suggestions. Included in those recommendations were suggestions that non-public schools not be required to adhere to minimum standards if they did not wish to be chartered, that additional courses be required in the curriculum and for graduation, that kindergarten be included as part of the standards, that the standards make provision for middle schools, and that certain support staff be added.

Following the ten regional hearings, the committee drafted a new set of standards to guide Ohio's schools. Those standards included the following changes:

1. A requirement for locally developed and administered competency testing programs.
2. An increase in the number of units required for graduation, from 17 to 19 including an additional unit of math instruction.
3. A required pupil teacher ratio on a district-wide basis by elementary, junior high and senior high classification of 25-1.
4. Provision for assistant principals in schools with more than 750 enrollment.

5. Adequate planning time for all teachers, elementary and secondary.

6. New classification of schools.

The proposed draft which focuses on state goals and the State Board's philosophy is now the subject of 11 regional hearings being held throughout Ohio during January and February. Following that set of hearings, recommendations will be made to the State Board of Education for adoption of a new set of minimum standards which will be consistent with the State Board's philosophy and goals and, hopefully, reflect the opinions, comments, and suggestions of Ohio citizens, educators, and students as reflected in the statewide opinion poll conducted early in 1980.

In an effort to go beyond simply surveying attitudes and revising minimum standards, the State Board of Education in January has explicated both their own goals and the minimum standards by adopting Mission Statements for the 80's for the schools of Ohio. This document focuses on thirteen major priorities for Ohio schools in the 1980's. They are:

. Improving Pupil Achievement
. Improving Pupil Attendance/Reducing Dropouts
. Reducing Discipline and Vandalism Problems
. Providing Adequate Funding for Schools
. Adjusting to Declining Enrollment
. Implementing Desegregation - Reducing Racial Isolation
. Improving Curriculum
. Strengthening Teacher Education and Staff Development
. Providing for Disadvantaged Youth
. Providing Meaningful Vocational Education
. Providing Appropriate Education for Handicapped and Gifted Children
. Enhancing School/Community Relations
. Implementing Effective Human Relations Efforts

It is hoped that the combination of a revised philosophy, the adoption of statewide learner goals, new minimum standards, and the Mission Statements for the 80's will help Ohio schools, universities, and the public-at-large direct their commitment, energy, and time to the important task of improving education for Ohio youngsters.

Implications and Recommendations: The implications of the new standards, once implemented (probably in 1982), are myriad. Primarily, the new standards necessitate the development of a much closer planning and working relationship between universities and public schools than has ever been seen in the state of Ohio. The preservice and inservice training of teachers and administrators must be a continnum, cooperatively developed by the universities, the State Department of Education, and representatives of teacher and administrator groups. Survey results indicate that teachers represent the group most praised and most criticized by the public.

Appropriate evaluation procedures, followed by staff development activities, must be cooperatively developed by school boards, administrators, teachers, and university personnel. The establishment of a teacher evaluation system and the provision for necessary inservice education to assist teachers in areas where improvement is needed is vital in improving education and regaining public confidence, both in higher education and elementary and secondary education.

The standards for teacher preparation, revised only four years ago and fully operational for the first time in 1980-1981, and administrator certification standards, currently being studied, must be examined in light of the new standards for elementary and secondary schools to eliminate conflicting provisions and assure compatibility of goal, objective, and function. Absent such audit and collaboration, each component--teacher training, administrator preparation, and public education--conceivably could operate at cross purposes.

The current curriculum must be reviewed to determine whether or not a proper scope and sequence for instruction exists. Parents and nonparents alike clearly indicated that they would like to see the schools focus first and foremost on the development of academic skills. If the schools' curricula do not provide the proper scope and sequence, then the schools have missed the target and must consider modifications and revisions. If the school

curricula do take into consideration proper scope and sequence, then attention must be given to developing the kinds of communications skills educators need to share this information with the public and with fellow professionals who do not seem able to demonstrate any articulation between the curriculum at the elementary schools and the junior high schools or between the junior high and the senior high schools.

The question of mandatory levels of achievement must be given attention by the universities, the State Board of Education, and the local educational governing bodies. Survey results show an overwhelming support for establishing student outcome based education in the schools. If educator-inspired competency statements are not forthcoming, the legislature will likely take the matter into its own hands and dictate competencies and the methods for assessing their achievement.

New and effective methods for communicating with a public that is composed primarily of non-student families must be developed by university personnel and included in the coursework for teacher and administrator preparation. Data from the survey indicate that 68 percent of Ohioans do not have children in the public schools. The age-old method of sending notes home with the children cannot be depended upon any longer. Even if one hundred percent of the notes were to arrive at their destinations, the schools would only be sending information out to one-third of the citizenry.

University programs dealing with effective student discipline and behavior management techniques must be developed and included in the preservice training of teachers and administrators. Additionally, inservice programs must be presented to veteran staff who are currently in the schools and are ill-prepared to deal with student behavior problems.

Parent-teacher conferences must be expanded in both scope and application. Regularly scheduled conferences must become a part of the secondary school

program as well as the elementary program. Teachers and administrators at all levels need to be trained in conferencing techniques and in the use of jargon-free language so that their message can be understood.

Parent and community volunteers must be encouraged to become involved in the educational process. This can only be accomplished if teachers and administrators are comfortable having observers in the schools. Teachers and administrators can only achieve such comfort if they are secure in what they are doing and if they feel adequately prepared to be on public view. It is the responsibility of the university to prepare educators to operate in the public eye and welcome public scrutiny.

Teachers and administrators must be trained to be not only educators of children but also community relations experts. The former practice of having teachers visit the homes of the students in their classes can serve as a basis for establishing a similar practice in the future. Once again, however, educators will not engage in such a practice if they are not trained to do so and if they have not been taught to relate to adults as well as to children.

Follow-up Activity: Following the preparation of this proposal, but prior to the presentation of this proposed paper, the State Department of Education will have publicized the draft standards. Regional meetings will have been conducted or will be in process to obtain input from all interested parties regarding concerns, questions, revisions, modifications, deletions or additions. The projected date for official State Board of Education action on recommended standards is July 1981. Limited field testing and extensive statewide inservice on the standards will be conducted during the ensuing school year with full implementation scheduled for September 1982.

Biographical Sketch of Presenters

Pat Eva Crisci, Ph.D., who is currently an associate professor of educational administration at Kent State University was assistant superintendent of public instruction for the State of Ohio when the State Board of Education first initiated the review of its philosophy of education and commenced upon the project of adopting goals for the 1980's and the revision of the standards for elementary and secondary education. Dr. Crisci was involved with these projects in her former position and is presently chairing a statewide committee that is examining standards for administrator certification.

Roger J. Lulow who is presently assistant superintendent of public instruction for the State of Ohio continued the work started with the State Board and also initiated the surveys of the public, educators, and students regarding the priorities for a "general education of high quality" for the State. He is currently directing the revision of the standards for elementary and secondary schools.